

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 26, 2004

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January 27 USCIRF hearing at UCLA Law School

WASHINGTON - The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), an independent, bipartisan federal agency, will hold a public, on-the-record hearing titled "North Korea: Human Rights Ground Zero" on January 27 in Los Angeles, CA at the UCLA School of Law. The hearing will focus on the conditions of human rights, including religious freedom, in North Korea, the plight of North Korean refugees, and recommendations for U.S. policy.

Commenting on a nighttime satellite photo of the Korean peninsula showing South Korea awash in light and North Korea in virtual darkness, President George W. Bush said that the photo is proof of the "light and opportunity that comes with freedom and the dark that comes with a regime that's repressive and holds its own people back." "The human rights crisis in North Korea should be at the forefront of U.S. foreign policy and underscores the moral obligation of all nations and free people everywhere to help and give hope to those who are oppressed," said USCIRF Chair Michael K. Young.

WHAT: "North Korea: Human Rights Ground Zero"

WHEN: Tuesday, January 27, 2004, 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

WHERE: University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)

UCLA School of Law, Room 1347

Los Angeles, California

Commissioners will hear testimony from the following confirmed participants:

David Hawk, Senior Researcher, U.S. Committee on Human Rights in North Korea and author of *The Hidden Gulag*, a major ground-breaking report on North Korea's prison camps

Reverend Isaac (last name withheld), Cornerstone Ministry (assists religious believers in North Korea)

Colonel Kim Yong, North Korean refugee, formerly with North Korean Military's Intelligence Service

Suzanne Scholte, President, Defense Forum Foundation (provides bipartisan educational programs on defense, national security, foreign policy and human rights issues specifically for the benefit of Congress)

Roger Winter, Assistant Administrator for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom was created by the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 to monitor the status of freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief abroad, as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and related international instruments, and to give independent policy recommendations to the President, the Secretary of State and the Congress.

- Fellow Michael K. Young

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